

brackets and underlining.

IN THE DRAWINGS:

Please amend Fig. 1 as shown on the attached sheets, including a replacement sheet with a clean copy of the amended drawing, and a sheet showing the changes to the drawing with hand-drawn markings.

REMARKS

Upon entry of the present Preliminary Amendment-A the claims in the application are claims 1-14, of which claims 1 and 9 are independent.

The specification is amended to overcome two minor informalities therein, including one noted by the Examiner at item 2 of the Office Action, and also to present a description of bindings 18 added to Fig. 1, and to provide an express antecedent basis for the amended language of claims 1 and 3. Fig. 1 is amended to generally show bindings 18, and also to correct an inconsistency in reference numerals as noted by the Examiner at item 3 of the Office Action. The Abstract is amended to replace legalese with other non-legal terms, in response to the Examiner's objection at item 1 of the Office Action.

Claim 1 is amended to further define that the connecting member is made of relatively rigid material and claim 3 is amended to define that the step board is *appreciably* greater in both length and width than the slide board, while new claims 6-14 define further aspects of the invention.

Applicant respectfully submits that the amendments are fully supported by the original application, and do not constitute new matter. Specifically, applicant notes the discussion at page 5, line 25 - page 6, line 17, and Figs. 3-4 of the original specification.

Applicant also respectfully submits that the above amendments to the specification, Abstract and Fig. 1 overcome the Examiner's objections to the Abstract, disclosure and drawings set forth at items 1-4 of the Office Action, and it is requested that such objections be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-3 under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Dykema et al. (US Patent 4,848,781), as set forth at item 6 of the Office Action. It is the Examiner's position that Dykema's pivoting deck snow board (particularly the embodiment shown in his Fig. 7) includes all of the limitations of claims 1-3.

Upon careful consideration and in view of the above amendment to claim 1, applicant respectfully submits that the snowboard of each of claims 1-3 is clearly patentably distinct over the Dykema reference, because pivoting deck snow board clearly does not include (but rather teaches away from) the use of a relatively rigid connecting member as now defined in claim 1, and also does not teach or suggest slide and deck boards having the relative dimensions defined in claim 3.

As discussed by Dykema, an essential function of his connecting means 26, 48-52, 58 or 66 is to enable his support deck (upper panel) "... to pivot along a longitudinal axis" relative to his runner (lower panel), and for this purpose the members of his connecting means are made of elastomer or other elastic material. Given such teaching and construction, it is clear that Dykema's connecting means are not made of "relatively rigid material", and thus do not anticipate (or suggest) the connecting member as now defined in claim 1.

Applicant respectfully submits that such distinction is very significant because the claimed invention achieves important advantages over conventional snowboards, including that of Dykema, e.g., the ability to move on and off the snowboard for performing a variety of flashy tricks similar to those performed on a skateboard.

Further, applicant respectfully submits that the upper and lower panels of Dykema's snow board do not have the relative dimensions as defined in original claim 3 because the panels have essentially the same length, whereas this distinction is further emphasized by the above amendment to claim 3, i.e., that the length and width of the deck board are appreciably greater than those of the slide board.

Based on the foregoing, applicant respectfully submits that the rejection of claims 1-3 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) based on the Dykema patent is overcome, and accordingly it is respectfully

requested that the rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

At item 8 of the Office Action, The Examiner has rejected claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Dykema et al. in view of Tinkler (US Patent 5,544,919), while at item 9 of the Office Action, The Examiner has rejected claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Dykema et al. in view of Laughlin et al. (US Patent 5,915,721). It is the Examiner's position that it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to provide Dykema's snow board with a foot support apparatus and a binding, as taught respectively by Tinkler and Laughlin, and that the claims 4-5 are rendered obvious by the modified snow board.

Upon careful consideration and (again) in view of the above amendment to claim 1, applicant respectfully submits that the snowboard of each of claims 4-5 is clearly patentably distinct over the applied references, based on the foregoing arguments regarding the deficiencies of Dykema, which are not overcome by any additional teachings of Tinkler and Laughlin because neither of these references pertains to a snowboard having deck and runner boards held in spaced parallel relation by a connecting member.

In view of the foregoing, the rejections of claims 4-5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) are believed to be overcome, and accordingly it is respectfully requested that the rejections of these claims be reconsidered and withdrawn.

The additional references cited by the Examiner at item 10 of the Office Action have been considered by applicant, but it is respectfully submitted that these additional references fail to overcome the deficiencies of the Dykema, Tinkler and Laughlin references relative to the present claims, as discussed above.

New claims 6-14 are believed to be allowable over the references of record based on the merits of claims 1-3 discussed above, and based on the merits of the additional features set forth in these new claims.

Conclusion

In conclusion, applicant has overcome the Examiner's objections and rejections as presented in the Office Action; and moreover, applicant has considered all of the references of record, and it is respectfully submitted that the invention as defined by each of the present claims is clearly patentably distinct thereover.

The application is now believed to be in condition for allowance, and a notice to this effect is earnestly solicited.

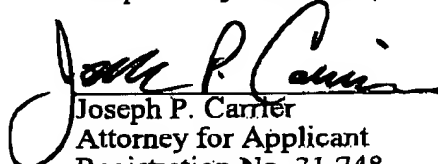
Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner is not fully convinced of all of the claims now in the application, applicant respectfully requests that she telephonically contact applicant's undersigned representative to expeditiously resolve prosecution of the application.

Favorable consideration is respectfully requested.

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Respectfully submitted,

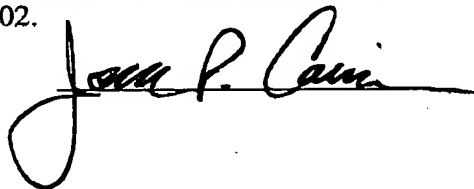

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CERTIFICATE OF TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being sent via facsimile transmission to the US Patent & Trademark Office, Art Unit 3618, on 27 February 2002.

Dated: 27 February 2002

JPC/ms
enclosures



[Paragraph at page 5, lines 13-17]

The slide board 2 and the step board 3 may come in any sizes. However, to improve the functionality and handling, preferably, the length and width of the step board are somewhat greater than those of the slide board by an appreciable amount, such as shown in Figs. 3-4. The length and the width of the step board are normally smaller than those of the conventional snowboard.

[Paragraph at page 5, line 25 - page 6, line 4]

The four connecting tubular members 4 retain the slide board 2 and step board 3 in affixed parallel relationship in cooperation with the threaded bolts 6 and nuts 7, and are typically provided inward of the [areas] depicted imaginary lines 14 where the boots of the snowboarder are placed. The tubular members 4 are typically made of hard plastic material or metallic material. As will be understood, the tubular members, as well as the bolts 6 and nuts 7, are made of relatively rigid materials.

[Paragraph at page 6, lines 5-17]

The deck 15 of the step board 3 is normally not provided with any boot bindings, but may also be provided with bindings particularly for a beginner to get quickly accustomed to the snowboard of the present invention. In such a case, a pair of bindings may be provided on the step board 3 for the right and left boots of the snowboarder. For such bindings, reference should be made to numerous prior US patents that can be readily searched as having the titles including "snowboard binding", and those available on the market. Because such bindings by themselves do not form a part of the present invention, the description of the boot bindings are omitted in this disclosure, while bindings 18 are very generally depicted in Fig. 1. Alternatively, only one binding may be provided on the step board 3 for the boot on the side of the nose 12 so that the left boot may be moved freely while the right boot is fixedly secured. It is also possible to allow a limited movement, such as a linear movement or a pivotal movement, to the binding or bindings.

[Paragraph at page 5, lines 13-17]

Q1 The slide board 2 and the step board 3 may come in any sizes. However, to improve the functionality and handling, preferably, the length and width of the step board are somewhat greater than those of the slide board by an appreciable amount, such as shown in Figs. 3-4. The length and the width of the step board are normally smaller than those of the conventional snowboard.

[Paragraph at page 5, line 25 - page 6, line 4]

Q2 The four connecting tubular members 4 retain the slide board 2 and step board 3 in affixed parallel relationship in cooperation with the threaded bolts 6 and nuts 7, and are typically provided inward of the depicted imaginary lines 14 where the boots of the snowboarder are placed. The tubular members 4 are typically made of hard plastic material or metallic material. As will be understood, the tubular members, as well as the bolts 6 and nuts 7, are made of relatively rigid materials.

[Paragraph at page 6, lines 5-17]

Q3 The deck 15 of the step board 3 is normally not provided with any boot bindings, but may also be provided with bindings particularly for a beginner to get quickly accustomed to the snowboard of the present invention. In such a case, a pair of bindings may be provided on the step board 3 for the right and left boots of the snowboarder. For such bindings, reference should be made to numerous prior US patents that can be readily searched as having the titles including "snowboard binding", and those available on the market. Because such bindings by themselves do not form a part of the present invention, the description of the boot bindings are omitted in this disclosure, while bindings 18 are very generally depicted in Fig. 1. Alternatively, only one binding may be provided on the step board 3 for the boot on the side of the nose 12 so that the left boot may be moved freely while the right boot is fixedly secured. It is also possible to allow a limited movement, such as a linear movement or a pivotal movement, to the binding or bindings.

1. (Amended) A snowboard for sliding over snow, comprising:

an elongated slide board having a slide surface on a lower surface thereof; and

an elongated step board defining a deck on an upper surface thereof, and attached to an upper surface of the slide board in a substantially parallel and spaced relationship via a connecting member made of relatively rigid material.

3. (Amended) A snowboard according to claim 1, wherein the snowboard is [somewhat] appreciably greater in both length and width than the slide board.

1. (Amended) A snowboard for sliding over snow, comprising:

a4
an elongated slide board having a slide surface on a lower surface thereof; and
an elongated step board defining a deck on an upper surface thereof, and attached to an upper surface of the slide board in a substantially parallel and spaced relationship via a connecting member made of relatively rigid material.

a5
3. (Amended) A snowboard according to claim 1, wherein the snowboard is appreciably greater in both length and width than the slide board.

6. (New) A snowboard according to claim 1, wherein the connecting member retains the slide board and step board in fixed parallel relationship.

Sub 2
7. (New) A snowboard according to claim 1, comprising a plurality of the connecting members formed of one of hard plastic material and metallic material and fixed between the slide board and the step board.

a6
Sub 3
8. (New) A snowboard according to claim 1, wherein the connecting members are tubular in shape.

9. (New) A snowboard for sliding over snow, comprising:

an elongated slide board having a slide surface on a lower surface thereof; and
an elongated step board defining a deck on an upper surface thereof, and attached to an upper surface of the slide board in a fixed, substantially parallel and spaced relationship via a connecting mechanism.

10. (New) A snowboard according to claim 9, wherein the connecting mechanism includes a connecting member formed of relatively rigid material and extending between the slide board and the step board.

11. (New) A snowboard according to claim 10, wherein the connecting member is formed of one of hard plastic material and metallic material.

12. (New) A snowboard according to claim 10, wherein the connecting member is tubular in shape.

13. (New) A snowboard according to claim 9, wherein the connecting mechanism is provided in a substantially middle part of the slide board.

14. (New) A snowboard according to claim 9, wherein the snowboard is appreciably greater in both length and width than the slide board.

ABSTRACT

[The] A snowboard [comprises] includes a slide board and a step board which are joined by a connecting member in a substantially parallel and spaced relationship. Because of the elevated position of the step board, the snowboarder gains a leverage in controlling the edges of the slide board without any substantial effort. Therefore, the snowboarder is enabled to control the snowboard without requiring his or her boots to be [fixedly secured] fixed to the snowboard. Also, because the snowboarder can move his or her feet on the deck at will, this additionally increases the freedom in shifting of the weight. Therefore, as opposed to the conventional snowboard which does not provide any such leverage, and [fixedly] restrains the snowboarder's feet to fixed positions thereon, the snowboarder is allowed to shift his or her weight much more effortlessly, and perform a greater variety of tricks.

ABSTRACT

01 A snowboard includes a slide board and a step board which are joined by a connecting member in a substantially parallel and spaced relationship. Because of the elevated position of the step board, the snowboarder gains a leverage in controlling the edges of the slide board without any substantial effort. Therefore, the snowboarder is enabled to control the snowboard without requiring his or her boots to be fixed to the snowboard. Also, because the snowboarder can move his or her feet on the deck at will, this additionally increases the freedom in shifting of the weight. Therefore, as opposed to the conventional snowboard which does not provide any such leverage, and restrains the snowboarder's feet to fixed positions thereon, the snowboarder is allowed to shift his or her weight much more effortlessly, and perform a greater variety of tricks.
